

Four Short Plays

The Full Moon, by Lady Gregory
The Movie Man, by Eugene O'Neill
The Twilight Saint, by Stark Young
The Stronger, by August Strindberg

THE FULL MOON

by Lady Gregory

TO ALL SANE PEOPLE IN OR OUT OF CLOON
WHO KNOW THEIR NEIGHBOURS TO BE
NATURALLY CRACKED OR SOMEWAY QUEER
OR TO HAVE GONE WRONG IN THE HEAD.

PERSONS [Sidenote: ALL SANE]

Shawn Early
Bartley Fallon
Peter Tannian
Hyacinth Halvey
Mrs. Broderick
Miss Joyce
Cracked Mary
Davideen,
HER BROTHER, AN INNOCENT

THE FULL MOON

Scene: A shed close to Cloon Station; Bartley Fallon is sitting gloomily on a box; Hyacinth Halvey and Shawn Early are coming in at door.

Shawn Early: It is likely the train will not be up to its time, and cattle being on it for the fair. It's best wait in the shed. Is that Bartley Fallon? What way are you, Bartley?

Bartley Fallon: Faith, no way at all. On the drag, on the drag; striving to put the bad times over me.

Shawn Early: Is it business with the nine o'clock you have?

Bartley Fallon: The wife that is gone visiting to Tubber, and

that has the door locked till such time as she will come back on the train. And I thought this shed a place where no bad thing would be apt to happen me, and not to be going through the streets, and the darkness falling.

Shawn Early: It is not long till the full moon will be rising.

Bartley Fallon: Everything that is bad, the falling sickness--God save the mark--or the like, should be at its worst at the full moon. I suppose because it is the leader of the stars.

Shawn Early: Ah, what could happen any person in the street of Cloon?

Bartley Fallon: There might. Look at Matt Finn, the coffin-maker, put his hand on a cage the circus brought, and the lion took and tore it till they stuck him with a fork you'd rise dung with, and at that he let it drop. And that was a man had never quitted Cloon.

Shawn Early: I thought you might be sending something to the fair.

Bartley Fallon: It isn't to the train I would be trusting anything I would have to sell, where it might be thrown off the track. And where would be the use sending the couple of little lambs I have? It is likely there is no one would ask me where was I going. When the weight is not in them, they won't carry the price. Sure, the grass I have is no good, but seven times worse than the road.

Shawn Early: They are saying there'll be good demand at the fair of Carrow to-morrow.

Hyacinth Halvey: To-morrow the fair day of Carrow? I was not remembering that.

Bartley Fallon: Ah, there won't be many in it, I'm thinking. There isn't a hungrier village in Connacht, they were telling me, and it's poor the look of it as well.

Hyacinth Halvey: To-morrow the fair day. There will be all sorts in the streets to-night.

Bartley Fallon: The sort that will be in it will be a bad sort--sievemakers and tramps and neuks.

Hyacinth Halvey: The tents on the fair green; there will be music in it; there was a fiddler having no legs would set men of threescore years and of fourscore years dancing. I can nearly hear his tune.

(He whistles "The Heather Broom.")

Bartley Fallon: You are apt to be going there on the train, I suppose? It is well to be you, Mr. Halvey, having a good place in the town, and the price of your fare, and maybe six times the price of it, in your pocket.

Hyacinth Halvey: I didn't think of that. I wonder could I go--for one night only--and see what the lads are doing.

Shawn Early: Are you forgetting, Mr. Halvey, that you are to meet his Reverence on the platform that is coming home from drinking water at the Spa?

Hyacinth Halvey: So I can meet him, and get in the train after him getting out.

(Mrs. Broderick and Peter Tannian come in.)

Mrs. Broderick: Is that Mr. Halvey is in it? I was looking for you at the chapel as I passed, and the Angelus bell after ringing.

Hyacinth Halvey: Business I have here, ma'am. I was in dread I might not be here before the train.

Mrs. Broderick: So you might not, indeed. That nine o'clock train you can never trust it to be late.

Hyacinth Halvey: To meet Father Gregan I am come, and maybe to go on myself.

Mrs. Broderick: Sure, I knew well you would be in haste to be before Father Gregan, and we knowing what we know.

Hyacinth Halvey: I have no business only to be showing respect to him.

Shawn Early: His good word he will give to Mr. Halvey at the Board, where it is likely he will be made Clerk of the Union next week.

Mrs. Broderick: His good word he will give to another thing besides that, I am thinking.

Hyacinth Halvey: I don't know what you are talking about.

Mrs. Broderick: Didn't you hear the news, Peter Tannian, that Mr. Halvey is apt to be linked and joined in marriage with Miss Joyce, the priest's housekeeper?

Peter Tannian: I to believe all the lies I'd hear, I'd be a racked man by this.

Mrs. Broderick: What I say now is as true as if you were on the other side of me. I suppose now the priest is come home there'll be no delay getting the license.

Hyacinth Halvey: It is not so settled as that.

Mrs. Broderick: Why wouldn't it be settled and it being told at Mrs. Delane's and through the whole world?

Peter Tannian: She should be a steady wife for him--a fortified girl.

Shawn Early: A very good fortune in the bank they are saying she has, and she having crossed the ocean twice to America.

Hartley Fallen: It's as good for him to have a woman will keep the door open before him and his victuals ready and a quiet tongue in her head. Not like that little Tartar of my own.

Mrs. Broderick: And an educated woman along with that. A man of his sort, going to be Clerk of the Union and to be taken up with books and papers, it's likely he'd die in a week, he to marry a dunce.

Bartley Fallon: So it's likely he would.

Mrs. Broderick: A little shop they are saying she will take, for to open a flour store, and you to be keeping the accounts, the way you would not spend any waste time.

Hyacinth Halvey: I have no mind to be settling myself down yet a while. I might maybe take a ramble here or there. There's many of my comrades in the States.

Mrs. Broderick: To go away from Cloon, is it? And why would you think to do that, and the whole town the same as a father and mother to you? Sure, the sergeant would live and die with you, and there are no two from this to Galway as great as yourself and the priest. To see you coming up the street, and your Dublin top-coat around you, there are some would give you a salute the same nearly as the Bishop.

Peter Tannian: They wouldn't do that maybe and they hearing things as I heard them.

Hyacinth Halvey: What things?

Peter Tannian: There was a herd passing through from Carrow. It is what I heard him saying-----

Mrs. Broderick: You heard nothing of Mr. Halvey, but what is worthy of him. But that's the way always. The most thing a man does,

the less he will get for it after.

Peter Tannian: A grand place in Carrow I suppose you had?

Hyacinth Halvey: I had plenty of places. Giving out proclamations--attending waterworks----.

Mrs. Broderick: It is well fitted for any place he is, and all that was written around him and he coming into Cloon.

Peter Tannian: Writing is easy.

Mrs. Broderick: Look at him since he was here, this twelvemonth back, that he never went into a dance-house or stood at a cross-road, and never lost a half-an-hour with drink. Made no blunder, made no rumours. Whatever could be said of his worth, it could not be too well said.

Hyacinth Halvey: Do you think now, ma'am, would it be any harm I to go spend a day or maybe two days out of this--I to go on the train----.

Miss Joyce: (At door, coming in backwards.) Go back now, go back! Don't be following after me in through the door! Is Mr. Halvey there? Don't let her come following me, Mr. Halvey!

Hyacinth Halvey: Who is it is in it?

(Sound of discordant singing outside.)

Miss Joyce: Cracked Mary it is, that is after coming back this day from the asylum.

Hyacinth Halvey: I never saw her, I think.

Shawn Early: The creature, she was light this long while and not good in the head, and at the last lunacy came on her and she was tied and bound. Sometimes singing and dancing she does be, and

sometimes troublesome.

_Miss Joyce: _ They had a right to keep her spancelled in the asylum. She would begrudge any respectable person to be walking the street. She'd hoot you, she'd shout you, she'd clap her hands at you. She is a blight in the town.

_Hyacinth Halvey: _ There is a lad along with her.

_Shawn Early: _ It is Davideen, her brother, that is innocent. He was left rambling from place to place the time she was put within walls.

_(Cracked Mary and Davideen come in.
Miss Joyce clings to Hyacinth's arm.)_

_Cracked Mary: _ Give me a charity now, the way I'll be keeping a little rag on me and a little shoe to my foot. Give me the price of tobacco and the price of a grain of tea; for tobacco is blessed and tea is good for the head.

_Shawn Early: _ Give out now, Davideen, a verse of "The Heather Broom." That's a splendid tune.

Davideen: (Sings.)

Oh, don't you remember,
As it's often I told you,
As you passed through our kitchen,
That a new broom sweeps clean?
Come out now and buy one,
Come out now and try one--

(His voice cracks, and he breaks off, laughing foolishly.)

_Mrs. Broderick: _ He has a sweet note in his voice, but to know or to understand what he is doing, he couldn't do it.

Cracked Mary: Leave him a while. His song that does be clogged through the daytime, the same as the sight is clogged with myself. It isn't but in the night time I can see anything worth while. Davy is a proper boy, a proper boy; let you leave Davy alone. It was himself came before me ere yesterday in the morning, and I walking out the madhouse door.

Shawn Early: It is often there will fiddlers be waiting to play for them coming out, that are maybe the finest dancers of the day.

Cracked Mary: Waiting before me he was, and no one to give him knowledge unless it might be the Big Man. I give you my word he near ate the face off me. As glad to see me he was as if I had dropped from heaven. Come hither to me, Davy, and give no heed to them. It is as dull and as lagging as themselves you would be maybe, and the world to be different and the moon to change its courses with the sun.

Bartley Fallon: I never would wish to be put within a madhouse before I'd die.

Cracked Mary: Sorry they were losing me. There was not a better prisoner in it than my own four bones.

Bartley Fallon: Squeals you would hear from it, they were telling me, like you'd hear at the ringing of the pigs. Savages with whips beating them the same as hounds. You would not stand and listen to them for a hundred sovereigns. Of all bad things that can come upon a man, it is certain the madness is the last.

Miss Joyce: It is likely she was well content in it, and the friends she had being of her own class.

Cracked Mary: What way could you make friends with people would be always talking? Too much of talk and of noise there was in it, cursing, and praying, and tormenting; some dancing, some singing, and one writing a letter to a she devil called Lucifer. I not to close my ears, I would have lost the sound of Davideen's song.

Miss Joyce: It was good shelter you got in it through the bad weather, and not to be out perishing under cold, the same as the starlings in the snow.

Cracked Mary: I was my seven months in it, my seven months and a day. My good clothes that went astray on me and my boots. My fine gaudy dress was all moth-eaten, that was worked with the wings of birds. To fall into dust and ashes it did, and the wings rose up into the high air.

Bartley Fallen: Take care would the madness catch on to ourselves the same as the chin-cough or the pock.

Mrs. Broderick: Ah, that's not the way it goes travelling from one to another, but some that are naturally cracked and inherit it.

Shawn Early: It is a family failing with her tribe. The most of them get giddy in their latter end.

Miss Joyce: It might be it was sent as a punishment before birth, for to show the power of God.

Peter Tannian: It is tea-drinking does it, and that is the reason it is on the wife it is apt to fall for the most part.

Mrs. Broderick: Ah, there's some does be thinking their wives isn't right, and there's others think they are too right. There to be any fear of me going astray, I give you my word I'd lose my wits on the moment.

Hyacinth Halvey: There are some say it is the moon.

Shawn Early: So it is too. The time the moon is going back, the blood that is in a person does be weakening, but when the moon is strong, the blood that moves strong in the same way. And it to be at the full, it drags the wits along with it, the same as it drags the tide.

Mrs. Broderick: Those that are light show off more and have the talk of twenty the time it is at the full, that is sure enough. And to hold up a silk handkerchief and to look through it, you would see the four quarters of the moon; I was often told that.

Miss Joyce: It is not you, Mr. Halvey, will give in to an unruly thing like the moon, that is under no authority, and cannot be put back, the same as a fast day that would chance to fall upon a feast.

Hyacinth Halvey: It is likely it is put in the sky the same as a clock for our use, the way you would pick knowledge of the weather, the time the stars would be wild about it.

Mrs. Broderick: That is very nice now. The thing you'd know, you'd like to go on, and to hear more or less about it.

Miss Joyce: (To H.H.) It is a lantern for your own use it will be to-night, and his Reverence coming home through the street, and yourself coming along with him to the house.

Mrs. Broderick: That's right, Miss Joyce. Keep a good grip of him. What do you say to him talking a while ago as if his mind was running on some thought to leave Cloon?

Miss Joyce: What way could he leave it?

Hyacinth Halvey: No way at all, I'm thinking, unless there would be a miracle worked by the moon.

Mrs. Broderick: Ah, miracles is gone out of the world this long time, with education, unless that they might happen in your own inside.

Miss Joyce: I'll go set the table and kindle the fire, and I'll come back to meet the train with you myself.

(She goes. A noise heard outside.)

Hyacinth Halvey: What is that now?

Shawn Early: (At door.) Some noise as of running.

Hartley Fallon: (Going to door.) It might chance to be some prisoner they would be bringing to the train.

Peter Tannian: No, but some lads that are running.

(They go out. H.H. is going too, but Mrs. Broderick goes before him and turns him round in doorway.)

Mrs. Broderick: Don't be coming out now in the dust that was formed by the heat is in the breeze. It would be a pity to spoil your Dublin coat, or your shirt that is that white you would nearly take it to be blue.

(She goes out, pushing him in and shutting door after her.)

Cracked Mary: Ha! ha! ha!

Hyacinth Halvey: What is it you are laughing at?

Cracked Mary: Ha! ha! ha! It is a very laughable thing now, the third most laughable thing I ever met with in my lifetime.

Hyacinth Halvey: What is that?

Cracked Mary: A fine young man to be shut up and bound in a narrow little shed, and the full moon rising, and I knowing what I know!

Hyacinth Halvey: It's little you are likely to know about me.

Cracked Mary: Tambourines and fiddles and pipes--melodeons and the whistling of drums.

Hyacinth Halvey: I suppose it is the Carrow fair you are talking

about.

Cracked Mary: Sitting within walls, and a top-coat wrapped around him, and mirth and music and frolic being in the place we know, and some dancing sets on the floor.

Hyacinth Halvey: I wish I wasn't in this place tonight. I would like well to be going on the train, if it wasn't for the talk the neighbours would be making. I would like well to slip away. It is a long time I am going without any sort of funny comrades.

(Goes to door. The others enter quickly, pushing him back.)

Bartley Fallon: Nothing at all to see. It would be best for us to have stopped where we were.

Mrs. Broderick: Running like foals to see it, and nothing to be in it worth while.

Hyacinth Halvey: What was it was in it?

Shawn Early: Nothing at all but some lads that were running in pursuit of a dog.

Bartley Fallon: Near knocked us they did, and they coming round the corner of the wall.

Hyacinth Halvey: Is it that it was a mad dog?

Peter Tannian: Ah, what mad? Mad dogs are done away with now by the head Government and muzzles and the police.

Bartley Fallon: They are more watchful over them than they used. But all the same, you to see a strange dog afar off, you would be uneasy, thinking it might be yourself he would be searching out as his prey.

Mrs. Broderick: Sure, there did a dog go mad through Galway, and

the whole town rose against him, and flocked him into a corner, and shot him there. He did no harm after, he being made an end of at the first.

Shawn Early: It might be that dog they were pursuing after was mad, on the head of being under the full moon.

Cracked Mary: (Jumping up excitedly.) That mad dog, he is a Dublin dog; he is betune you and Belfast--he is running ahead--you couldn't keep up with him.

Hyacinth Halvey: There is one, so, mad upon the road.

Cracked Mary: There is police after him, but they cannot come up with him; he destroyed a splendid sow; nine bonavs they buried or less.

Shawn Early: What place is he gone now?

Cracked Mary: He made off towards Craughwell, and he bit a fine young man.

Bartley Fallen: So he would too. Sure, when a mad dog would be going about, on horseback or wherever you are, you're ruined.

Cracked Mary: That dog is going on all the time; he wouldn't stop, but go ahead and bring that mouthful with him. He is still on the road; he is keeping the middle of the road; they say he is as big as a calf.

Hyacinth Halvey: It is the police I have a right to forewarn to go after him.

Cracked Mary: The motor cars is going to get out to track him, for fear he would destroy the world!

Mrs. Broderick: That is a very nice thought now, to be sending the motor cars after him to overturn and to crush him the same as an

ass-car in their path.

Cracked Mary: You can't save yourself from a dog; he is after his own equals, dogs. He is doing every harm. They are out night and day.

Shawn Early: Sure, a mad dog would go from this to Kinvara in a half a minute, like the train.

Cracked Mary: He won't stay in this country down--he goes the straight road--he takes by the wind. He is as big as a yearling calf.

Mrs. Broderick: I wouldn't ever forgive myself I to see him.

Cracked Mary: He is not very heavy yet. There is only the relics in him.

Hyacinth Halvey: They have a right to bring their rifles in their hand.

Cracked Mary: The police is afraid of their life. They wrote for motor cars to follow him. Sure, he'd destroy the beasts of the field. A milch cow, he to grab at her, she's settled. Terrible wicked he is; he's as big as five dogs, and he does be very strong. I hope in the Lord he'll be caught. It will be a blessing from the Almighty God to kill that dog.

Hyacinth Halvey: He is surely the one is raging through the street.

Peter Tannian: Why wouldn't he be him? Is it likely there would be two of them in it at the one time?

Shawn Early: A queer cut of a dog he was; a lurcher, a bastard hound.

Peter Tannian: I would say him to be about the size of the foal of a horse.

Mrs. Broderick: Didn't he behave well not to do ourselves an injury?

Bartley Fallon: It is likely he will do great destruction. I wouldn't say but I felt the weight of him and his two paws around my neck.

Hyacinth Halvey: I will go out following him.

Shawn Early: (Holding him) Oh, let you not endanger yourself! It is the peelers should go follow him, that are armed with their batons and their guns.

Hyacinth Halvey: I'll go. He might do some injury going through the town.

Mrs. Broderick: Ah now, it is not yourself we would let go into danger! It is Peter Tannian should go, if any person should go.

Peter Tannian: Is it Hyacinth Halvey you are taking to be so far before myself?

Mrs. Broderick: Why wouldn't he be before you?

Peter Tannian: Ask him what was he in Carrow? Ask was he a sort of a corner-boy, ringing the bell, pumping water, gathering a few coppers in the daytime for to scatter on a game of cards.

Hyacinth Halvey: Stop your lies and your chat!

Mrs. Broderick: (to Tannian) You are going light in the head to talk that way.

Shawn Early: He is, and queer in the mind. Take care did he get a bite from the dog, that left some venom working in his blood.

Hyacinth Halvey: So he might, and he having a sort of a little

rent in his sleeve.

Peter Tannian: I to have got a bite from the dog, is it? I did not come anear him at all. You to strip me as bare as winter you will not find the track of his teeth. It is Shawn Early was nearer to him than what I was.

Shawn Early: I was not nearer, or as near as what Mrs. Broderick was.

Mrs. Broderick: I made away when I saw him. My chest is not the better of it yet. Since I left off fretting I got gross. I am that nervous I would run from a blessed sheep, let alone a dog.

Shawn Early: To see any of the signs of madness upon him, it is Mr. Halvey the sergeant would look to for to make his report.

Hyacinth Halvey: So I would make a report.

Peter Tannian: Is it that you lay down you can see signs? Is that the learning they were giving you in Carrow?

Mrs. Broderick: Don't be speaking with him at all. It is easy know the signs. A person to be laughing and mocking, and that would not have the same habits with yourself, or to have no fear of things you would be in dread of, or to be using a different class of food.

Peter Tannian: I use no food but clean food.

Hyacinth Halvey: To be giddy in the head is a sign, and to be talking of things that passed years ago.

Peter Tannian: I am talking of nothing but the thing I have a right to talk of.

Mrs. Broderick: To be nervous and thinking and pausing, and playing with knickknacks.

Peter Tannian: It never was my habit to be playing with knickknacks.

Bartley Fallon: When the master in the school where I was went queer, he beat me with two clean rods, and wrote my name with my own blood.

Mrs. Broderick: To take the shoe off their foot, and to hit out right and left with it, bawling their life out, tearing their clothes, scattering and casting them in every part; or to run naked through the town, and all the people after them.

Shawn Early: To be jumping the height of trees they do be, and all the people striving to slacken them.

Hyacinth Halvey: To steal prayer-books and rosaries, and to be saying prayers they never could keep in mind before.

Mrs. Broderick: Very strong, that they could leap a wall--jumping and pushing and kicking--or to tie people to one another with a rope.

Shawn Early: Any fear of any person here being violent, Mr. Halvey will get him put under restraint.

Peter Tannian: Is it myself you are thinking to put under restraint? Would a man would be pushing and kicking and tearing his clothes, be able to do arithmetic on a board? Look now at that.

(Chalks figures on door.) Three and three makes six!--and three--

Mrs. Broderick: I'm no hand at figuring, but I can say out a blessed hymn, what any person with the mind gone contrary in them could not do. Hearken now till you'll know is there confusion in my mind. _(Sings.)_

Mary Broderick is my name;
Fiddane was my station;
Cloon is my dwelling-place;

And (I hope) heaven is my destination.

Mary Broderick is my name,
Cloon was my--

Cracked Mary: (With a cackle of delight.)_ Give heed to them now, Davideen! That's the way the crazed people used to be going on in the place where I was, every one thinking the other to be cracked.

Hyacinth Halvey: (To Tannian.)_ Look now at your great figuring! Argus with his hundred eyes wouldn't know is that a nought or is it a nine without a tail.

Peter Tannian: Leave that blame on a little ridge that is in the nature of the chalk. Look now at Mary Broderick, that it has failed to word out her verse.

Mrs. Broderick: Ah, what signifies? I'd never get light greatly. It wouldn't be worth while I to go mad.

(Bartley Fallon gives a deep groan.)

Shawn Early: What is on you, Bartley?

Bartley Fallon: I'm in dread it is I myself has got the venom into my blood.

Hyacinth Halvey: What makes you think that?

Bartley Fallon: It's a sort of a thing would be apt to happen me, and any malice to fall within the town at all.

Mrs. Broderick: Give heed to him, Hyacinth Halvey; you are the most man we have to baffle any wrong thing coming in our midst!

Hyacinth Halvey: Is it that you are feeling any pain as of a wound or a sore?

Bartley Fallon: Some sort of a little catch I'm thinking there is in under my knee. I would feel no pain unless I would turn it contrary.

Hyacinth Halvey: What class of feeling would you say you are feeling?

Bartley Fallon: I am feeling as if the five fingers of my hand to be lessening from me, the same as five farthing dips the heat of the sun would be sweating the tallow from.

Hyacinth Halvey: That is a strange account.

Bartley Fallon: And a sort of a megrim in my head, the same as a sheep would get a fit of staggers in a field.

Hyacinth Halvey: That is what I would look for. Is there some sort of a roaring in your ear?

Bartley Fallon: There is, there is, as if I would hear voices would be talking.

Hyacinth Halvey: Would you feel any wish to go tearing and destroying?

Bartley Fallon: I would indeed, and there to be an enemy upon my path. Would you say now, Widow Broderick, am I getting anyway flushy in the face?

Mrs. Broderick: Don't leave your eye off him for pity's sake. He is reddening as red as a rose.

Bartley Fallon: I could as if walk on the wind with lightness. Something that is rising in my veins the same as froth would be rising on a pint.

Hyacinth Halvey: It is the doctor I'd best call for--and maybe the sergeant and the priest.

Bartley Fallon: There are three thoughts going through my mind--to hang myself or to drown myself, or to cut my neck with a reaping-hook.

Mrs. Broderick: It is the doctor will serve him best, where it is the mad blood that should be bled away. To break up eggs, the white of them, in a tin can, will put new blood in him, and whiskey, and to taste no food through twenty-one days.

Bartley Fallon: I'm thinking so long a fast wouldn't serve me. I wouldn't wish the lads will bear my body to the grave, to lay down there was nothing within it but a grasshopper or a wisp of dry grass.

Shawn Early: No, but to cut a piece out of his leg the doctor will, the way the poison will get no leave to work.

Peter Tannian: Or to burn it with red-hot irons, the way it will not scatter itself and grow. There does a doctor do that out in foreign.

Mrs. Broderick: It would be more natural to cut the leg off him in some sort of a Christian way.

Shawn Early: If it was a pig was bit, or a sow or a bonav, it to show the signs, it would be shot, if it was a whole fleet of them was in it.

Mrs. Broderick: I knew of a man that was butler in a big house was bit, and they tied him first and smothered him after, and his master shot the dog. A splendid shot he was; the thing he'd not see he'd hit it the same as the thing he'd see. I heard that from an outside neighbour of my own, a woman that told no lies.

Shawn Early: Sure, they did the same thing to a high-up lady over in England, and she after being bit by her own little spaniel and it having a ring around its neck.

Peter Tannian: That is the only best thing to do. Whether the bite is from a dog, or a cat, or whatever it may be, to put the quilt and the blankets on the person and smother him in the bed. To smother them out-and-out you should, before the madness will work.

Hyacinth Halvey: I'd be loth he to be shot or smothered. I'd sooner to give him a chance in the asylum.

Mrs. Broderick: To keep him there and to try him through three changes of the moon. It's well for you, Bartley, Mr. Halvey being in charge of you, that is known to be a tender man.

Peter Tannian: He to have got a bite and to go biting others, he would put in them the same malice. It is the old people used to tell that down, and they must have had some reason doing that.

Shawn Early: To get a bite of a dog you must chance your life. There is no doubt at all about that. It might work till the time of the new moon or the full moon, and then they must be shot or smothered.

Hyacinth Halvey: It is a pity there to be no cure found for it in the world.

Shawn Early: There never came out from the Almighty any cure for a mad dog.

(Bartley Fallon has been edging towards door.)

Shawn Early: Oh! stop him and keep a hold of him, Mr. Halvey!

Hyacinth Halvey: Stop where you are.

Bartley Fallon: Isn't it enough to have madness before me, that you will not let me go fall in my own choice place?

Hyacinth Halvey: The neighbours would think it bad of me to let a raving man out into their midst.

Bartley Fallon: Is it to shoot me you are going?

Hyacinth Halvey: I will call to the doctor to say is the padded room at the workhouse the most place where you will be safe, till such time as it will be known did the poison wear away.

Bartley Fallon: I will not go in it! It is likely I might be forgot in it, or the nurses to be in dread to bring me nourishment, and they to hear me barking within the door. I'm thinking it was allotted by nature I never would die an easy death.

Hyacinth Halvey: I will keep a watch over you myself.

Bartley Fallon: Where's the use of that the time the breath will be gone out of me, and you maybe playing cards on my coffin, and I having nothing around or about me but the shroud, and the habit, and the little board?

Hyacinth Halvey: Sure, I cannot leave you the way you are.

Bartley Fallon: It is what I ever and always heard, a dog to bite you, all you have to do is to take a pinch of its hair and to lay it into the wound.

Mrs. Broderick: So I heard that myself. A dog to bite any person he is entitled to be plucked of his hair.

Hyacinth Halvey: I'll go out; I might chance to see him.

Mrs. Broderick: You will not, without getting advice from the priest that is coming in the train. Let his Reverence come into this place, and say is it Bartley or is it Peter Tannian was done destruction on by the dog.

Shawn Early: There is a surer way than that.

Mrs. Broderick: What way?

Shawn Early: It takes madness to find out madness. Let you call to the cracked woman that should know.

Hyacinth Halvey: Come hither, Mary, and tell us is there any one of your own sort in this shed?

Mrs. Broderick: That is a good thought. It is only themselves that recognise one another.

Bartley Fallon: Do not ask her! I will not leave it to her!

Mrs. Broderick: Sure, she cannot say more than what yourself has said against yourself.

Bartley Fallon: I'm in dread she might know too much, and be telling out what is within in my mind.

Hyacinth Halvey: That's foolishness. These are not the ancient times, when Ireland was full of haunted people.

Bartley Fallon: Is a man having a wife and three acres of land to be put under the judgment of a witch?

Hyacinth Halvey: I would not give in to any pagan thing, but to recognise one of her own sort, that is a thing can be understood.

Mrs. Broderick: So it could be too, the same as witnesses in a court.

Bartley Fallon: I will not give in to going to demons or druids or freemasons! Wasn't there enough of misfortune set before my path through every day of my lifetime without it to be linked with me after my death? Is it that you would force me to lose the comforts of heaven and to get the poverty of hell? I tell you I will have no trade with witches! I would sooner go face the featherbeds.

Hyacinth Halvey: Say out, girl, do you see any craziness here or

anything of the sort?

Cracked Mary: Every day in the year there comes some malice into the world, and where it comes from is no good place.

Mrs. Broderick: That is it, a venomous dew, as in the year of the famine. There is no astronomer can say it is from the earth or the sky.

Hyacinth Halvey: It is what we are asking you, did any of that malice get its scope in this place?

Cracked Mary: That was settled in Mayo two thousand years ago.

Mrs. Broderick: Ah, there's no head or tail to that one's story. You 'd be left at the latter end the same as at the commencement.

Hyacinth Halvey: That dog you were talking of, that is raging through the district and the town--did it leave any madness after it?

Cracked Mary: It will go in the wind, there is a certain time for that. It might go off in the wind again. It might go shaping off and do no harm.

Bartley Fallon: Where is that dog presently, till some person might go pluck out a few ribs of its hair?

Cracked Mary: Raging ever and always it is, raging wild. Sure, that is a dog was in it before the foundations of the world.

Peter Tannian: Who is it now that venom fell on, whatever beast's jaws may have scattered it?

Cracked Mary: It is the full moon knows that. The moon to slacken it is safe, there is no harm in it. Almighty God will do that much. He'll slacken it like you 'd slacken lime.

Shawn Early: There is reason in what she is saying. Set open the

door and let the full moon call its own!

Bartley Fallon: Don't let in the rays of it upon us or I'm a gone man. It to shine on them that are going wrong in the head, it would raise a great stir in the mind. Sure, it's in the asylum at that time they do have whips to chastise them.

(Goes to corner.)

Cracked Mary: That's it. The moon is terrible. The full moon cracks them out and out, any one that would have any spleen or any relics in them.

Mrs. Broderick: Do not let in the light of it. I would scruple to look at it myself.

Cracked Mary: Let you throw open the door, Davideen. It is not ourselves are in dread that the white man in the sky will be calling names after us and ridiculing us. Ha! ha! I might be as foolish as yourselves and as fearful, but for the Almighty that left a little cleft in my skull, that would let in His candle through the night time.

Hyacinth Halvey: Hurry on now, tell us is there any one in this place is wild and astray like yourself.

(He opens the door. The light falls on him.)

Cracked Mary: (Putting her hand on him.) There was great shouting in the big round house, and you coming into it last night.

Hyacinth Halvey: What are you saying? I never went frolicking in the night time since the day I came into Cloon.

Cracked Mary: We were talking of it a while ago. I knew you by the smile and by the laugh of you. A queen having a yellow dress, and the hair on her smooth like marble. All the dead of the village were in it, and of the living myself and yourself.

Hyacinth Halvey: I thought it was of Carrow she was talking; it is of the other world she is raving, and of the shadow-shapes of the forth.

Cracked Mary: You have the door open--the speckled horses are on the road!--make a leap on the horse as it goes by, the horse that is without a rider. Can't you hear them puffing and roaring? Their breath is like a fog upon the air.

Hyacinth Halvey: What you hear is but the train puffing afar off.

Cracked Mary: Make a snap at the bridle as it passes by the bush in the western gap. Run out now, run, where you have the bare ridge of the world before you, and no one to take orders from but yourself, maybe, and God.

Hyacinth Halvey: Ah, what way can I run to any place!

Cracked Mary: Stop where you are, so. In my opinion it is little difference the moon can see between the whole of ye. Come on, Davideen, come out now, we have the wideness of the night before us. O golden God! All bad things quieten in the night time, and the ugly thing itself will put on some sort of a decent face! Come out now to the night that will give you the song, and will show myself out as beautiful as Helen of the Greek gods, that hanged herself the day there first came a wrinkle on her face!

Davideen: (Coming close, and taking her hand as he sings.)

Oh! don't you remember
What our comrades called to us
And they footing steps
At the call of the moon?
Come out to the rushes,
Come out to the bushes,
Where the music is called
By the lads of Queen Anne!

(They look beautiful. They dance and sing in perfect time as they go out.)

_Peter Tannian:
(Closing the door, and pointing at Hyacinth, who stands gazing after them, and when the door is shut sits down thinking deeply.)_
It is on him her judgment fell, and a clear judgment.

Shawn Early: She gave out that award fair enough.

Peter Tannian: Did you take notice, and he coming into the shed, he had like some sort of a little twist in his walk?

Mrs. Broderick: I would be loth to think there would be any poison lurking in his veins. Where now would it come from, and Cracked Mary's dog being as good as no dog at all?

Peter Tannian: It might chance, and he a child in the cradle, to get the bite of a dog. It might be only now, its full time being come, its power would begin to work.

Mrs. Broderick: So it would too, and he but to see the shadow of the dog bit him in a body glass, or in the waves, and he himself looking over a boat, and as if called to throw himself in the tide. But I would not have thought it of Mr. Halvey. Well, it's as hard to know what might be spreading abroad in any person's mind, as to put the body of a horse out through a cambric needle.

(Hyacinth looks at them.)

Shawn Early: Be quiet now, he is going to say some word.

Hyacinth Halvey: There is a thought in my mind. I think it was coming this good while.

Shawn Early: Whisht now and listen.

Hyacinth Halvey: I made a great mistake coming into this place.

Peter Tannian: There was some mistake made anyway.

Hyacinth: It is foolishness kept me in it ever since. It is too big a name was put upon me.

Peter Tannian: It is the power of the moon is forcing the truth out of him.

Hyacinth Halvey: Every person in the town giving me out for more than I am. I got too much of that in the heel.

Shawn Early: He is talking queer now anyway.

Hyacinth Halvey: Calling to me every little minute--expecting me to do this thing and that thing--watching me the same as a watchdog, their eyes as if fixed upon my face.

Mrs. Broderick: To be giving out such strange thoughts, he hasn't much brains left around him.

Hyacinth Halvey: I looking to be Clerk of the Union, and the place I had giving me enough to do, and too much to do. Tied on this side, tied on that side. I to be bothered with business through the holy livelong day!

Peter Tannian: It is good pay he got with it. Eighty pounds a year doesn't come on the wind.

Hyacinth Halvey: In danger to be linked and wed--I never ambitioned it--with a woman would want me to be earning through every day of the year.

Shawn Early: He is a gone man surely.

Hyacinth Hakey: The wide ridge of the world before me, and to have no one to look to for orders; that would be better than roast

and boiled and all the comforts of the day. I declare to goodness, and I 'd nearly take my oath, I 'd sooner be among a fleet of tinkers, than attending meetings of the Board!

Mrs. Broderick: If there are fairies in it, it is in the fairies he is.

Peter Tannian: Give me a hold of that chain.

Mrs. Broderick: What is it you are about to do?

Peter Tannian: To bind him to the chair I will before he will burst out wild mad. Come over here, Bartley Fallon, and lend a hand if you can.

_(Bartley Fallon appears from corner with a __chicken crate over his head.)_

Mrs. Broderick: O Bartley, that is the strangest lightness ever I saw, to go bind a chicken crate around your skull!

Bartley Fallon: Will you tighten the knots I have tied, Peter Tannian! I am in dread they might slacken or fail.

Shawn Early: Was there ever seen before this night such power to be in the moon!

Bartley Fallon: It would seem to be putting very wild unruly thoughts a-through me, stirring up whatever spleen or whatever relics was left in me by the nature of the dog.

Peter Tannian: Is it that you think those rods, spaced wide, as they are, will keep out the moon from entering your brain?

Bartley Fallon: There does great strength come at the time the wits would be driven out of a person. I never was handled by a policeman--but once--and never hit a blow on any man. I would not wish to destroy my neighbour or to have his blood on my hands.

Shawn Early: It is best keep out of his reach.

Bartley Fallon: The way I have this fixed, there is no person will be the worse for me. I to rush down the street and to meet with my most enemy in some lonesome craggy place, it would fail me, and I thrusting for it to scatter any share of poison in his body or to sink my teeth in his skin. I wouldn't wonder I to have hung for some of you, and that plan not to have come into my head.

(Whistle of train heard.)

Hyacinth Halvey: (Getting up.) I have my mind made up, I am going out of this on that train.

Peter Tannian: You are not going so easy as what you think.

Hyacinth Halvey: Let you mind your own business.

Peter Tannian: I am well able to mind it.

Hyacinth Halvey: (Throwing off top-coat.) You cannot keep me here.

Peter Tannian: Give me a hand with the chain.

(They throw it round Hyacinth and hold him.)

Hyacinth Halvey: Is it out of your senses you are gone?

Peter Tannian: Not at all, but yourself that is gone raving mad from the fury and the strength of some dog.

Miss Joyce: (At door.) Are you there, Hyacinth Halvey? The train is in. Come forward now, and give a welcome to his Reverence.

Hyacinth Halvey: Let me go out of this!

Miss Joyce: You are near late as it is. The train is about to start.

Hyacinth Halvey: Let me go, or I'll tear the heart out of ye!

Shawn Early: Oh, he is stark, staring mad!

Hyacinth Halvey: Mad, am I? Bit by a dog, am I? You'll see am I mad! I'll show madness to you! Let go your hold or I'll skin you! I'll destroy you! I'll bite you! I'm a red enemy to the whole of you! Leave go your grip! Yes, I'm mad! Bow wow wow, wow wow!

(They let go and fall back in terror, and he rushes out of the door.)

Miss Joyce: What at all has happened? Where is he gone?

Shawn Early: To the train he is gone, and away in it he is gone.

Miss Joyce: He gave some sort of a bark or a howl.

Shawn Early: He is gone clean mad. Great arguing he had, and leaping and roaring.

Bartley Fallon: (Taking off crate.)_ He went very near to tear us all asunder. I declare I am'n't worth a match.

Mrs. Broderick: He made a reel in my head, till I don't know am I right myself.

Shawn Early: Bawling his life out, tearing his clothes, tearing and eating them. Look at his top-coat he left after him.

Bartley Fallon: He poured all over with pure white foam.

Peter Tannian: There now is an end of your elegant man.

Shawn Early: Bit he was with the mad dog that went tearing, and lads chasing him a while ago.

Miss Joyce: Sure that was Tannian's own dog, that had a bit of meat snapped from Quirke's ass-car. He is without this door now. _ (All look out.)_ He has the appearance of having a full meal taken.

Bartley Fallon: And they to be saying I went mad. That is the way always, and a thing to be tasked to me that was not in it at all.

Mrs. Broderick: _ (Laying her hand on Miss Joyce's shoulder.)_ Take comfort now; and if it was the moon done all, and has your bachelor swept, let you not begrudge it its full share of praise for the hand it had in banishing a strange bird, might have gone wild and bawling like eleven, and you after being wed with him, and would maybe have put a match to the roof. And hadn't you the luck of the world now, that you did not give notice to the priest!

Curtain

from: New Irish Comedies

Author: Lady Augusta Gregory

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THE MOVIE MAN

By Eugene O'Neill

(1914)

<http://www.eoneill.com/texts/movie/contents.htm>

CHARACTERS—

HENRY (HEN) ROGERS, Representative of Earth Motion Picture Company

AL DEVLIN, Photographer for the same Company

PANCHO GOMEZ, Commander-in-Chief of the Constitutionalist Army

LUIS VIRELLA, General of Division

ANITA FERNANDEZ

A SENTRY

SCENE—The main room of a house in the suburb of a large town in northern Mexico. To the left, a whitewashed wall of adobe with a small black crucifix hanging from a nail. In the rear wall, a doorway opening on the street. On either side of the doorway, an open window. On the right side of the room, another door which is closed. On the wall above it, a faded lithograph of the Virgin. In the left-hand corner several Mauser carbines are stacked, and bandoleers of cartridges are thrown on the dirt floor beside them. In the right-hand corner several saddles are lying. Near the door, another saddle. In the middle of the room a rickety table with a pen, paper, and ink on it. Three or four stiff cane-bottomed chairs are placed about the table.

Hen Rogers and Al Devlin are sitting by the table. Both are smoking pipes. Both are dressed in khaki shirts, riding breeches, puttees, etc. Their wide-brimmed Stetson hats are on the table beside them. Rogers is tall, blond, clean-shaven, in his early thirties. Devlin is short, dark, with a good-natured irregular face, middle-aged.

A sentry in a filthy, ragged olive-drab uniform lolls in the doorway leaning on his rifle. He wears the wide sombrero of the Mexican peon, and is bare-footed. He is smoking a cigarette and watching the two Americans with an expression of bored indifference.

It is in the early hours of a sultry tropic night.

DEVLIN—(singing in a cracked falsetto) Mexico, my nice cool Mexico!

ROGERS—(mopping the perspiration from his forehead with a bandana handkerchief) Have a heart, Al, have a heart, and kill the canary-bird stuff. If you see anything to be merry over in this flea-bitten cluster of shanties, you got something on me.

DEVLIN—(chuckling) Lovely little spot to spend the summer!

ROGERS—(dryly) Ideal is the word. And speaking of fleas, on the level, I never knew what a poor dog has to put up with until I hit this one-horse country.

DEVLIN—They don't bother me any.

ROGERS—No, they've got some class, you gotta hand it to them.

DEVLIN—Is that so?

ROGERS—"Discretion is the better part of valor"—any well-bred Mexican flea is hep to that. Those are the first words in the Mexican Constitution and every man and beast in this country swears by them; if they didn't we'd have been in Mexico City months ago; and right now I'd be down at Manhattan Beach in God's Country with a large mint julep, full of ice—

DEVLIN—(with a groan) Help! Help! I'm a nut!

ROGERS—When this cruel war is over and on the films I'm going to quit the picture business and go way up north, marry an Esquimau, and start housekeeping on an exclusive, refined, accordion-pleated, little iceberg.

DEVLIN—(whistles shrilly to the sentry who grabs his rifle in alarm) Boy, page an iceberg for Mr. Rogers!

THE SENTRY—(with lazy scorn) Muy loco!

ROGERS—What's that he said, Al? Look it up in your little book. It sounded almost like real talk.

DEVLIN—(with a laugh) I don't have to look that up. He means we're crazy.

ROGERS—(to the sentry—approvingly) You said something then, Mike. We sure are as nutty as a fruitcake or we wouldn't be here. Phew, but it's hot! (after a short pause musingly) Say, Al, did you ever notice the happy, contented expression on a polar bear's face?

DEVLIN—(laughing) Basta! Basta! (The sentry instinctively springs to attention, then lapses into indifference again as he realizes it is only the

crazy American speaking.)

ROGERS—Say, you're getting to be a regular talker of spigoty! Slip me the answer to that word "basta", will you? I hear friend General pulling it all the time; and just to show you what a fine little guesser I am, I'll bet you a case-note it means "when".

DEVLIN—Come across with that peso. It doesn't mean "when"; it means "enough".

ROGERS—Same thing—I knew it—I never yet heard him say it when I was pouring him out a drink.

DEVLIN—You owe me a peso, don't forget it.

ROGERS—(grumblingly) I'm not liable to with you around. (An excited babble of voices is heard from the door on the right.) Listen to those boobs, will you! What do you suppose they're framing up in there?

DEVLIN—Who is it—Gomez?

ROGERS—Yes; he and all his little generals are having some sort of a confab. I'll bet you that smack back again he's going to try and capture the town tomorrow.

DEVLIN—What's this you're springing on me—inside information?

ROGERS—Nope; but this afternoon I gave him that case of Scotch I promised him when he signed our contract, and he's feeling some brave this evening.

DEVLIN—Say, Hen, about that contract, I forgot to tell you, you want a hand a call to this Gomez guy. He is playing the game. You remember the other day when they were going after that fort on the outskirts?

ROGERS—Sure—good stuff—plenty of real live action that day.

DEVLIN—(indignantly) It was good stuff all right, but I missed all the first part of it on account of that simp General Virella. He was just waving his sword and ordering 'em to charge when I came up. "Here you!" I said to him, "wait a minute. Can't you see I'm not ready for you yet?" And what do you think that greaser said to me? You know he speaks good English. He says: "Shall my glorious soldiers be massacred waiting for your machine?" And away he runs with all his yellow-bellies after him. What d'you know about that?

ROGERS—(frowning) He's a fresh guy, that Virella. I'll have Gomez stick him back in the rear after this. He's a mean little worm, too. He's the one who's nagged Gomez into croaking old Fernandez.

DEVLIN—What! Are they going to shoot Fernandez?

ROGERS—At sunrise tomorrow they stand him against the wall and—

curtain.

DEVLIN—It's a damn shame—just because they can't get any more coin out of him. He's a good fellow—Fernandez. Went to school in the States—Cornell or someplace. Can't you get him off?

ROGERS—Nix. Virella has a grudge against him and Gomez needs Virella. Anyway, I've got no license to butt in on their little scraps. Besides it'll make a great picture. Be sure and get it.

DEVLIN—I'll be there. Say, have them hold it till a little later, will you? The light isn't any good so early.

ROGERS—How'll eight o'clock do?

DEVLIN—Great!

ROGERS—All right, I'll tell Gomez to postpone it till then. (A shrill voice is heard shouting: "Viva" from the room on the right.) That's Virella, now. I'd like to take just one swing at that guy. They'd carry him home in a white-pine kimona. (another cheer from the room next door) Full of booze and patriotism! Gee, I wish I was a war correspondent. I'd send in a little notice like this: "The courage and spirits of the troops were never better. A trainload of rum arrived today. We will be in Mexico City in two weeks."

DEVLIN—(picking his hat from the table, gets to his feet) I think I'll take a look around and see what's doing.

ROGERS—Oho! I've got your number all right!

DEVLIN—(laughing) What do you mean: got my number?

ROGERS—Have a care, little one, have a care! Some one of these Mexican dolls you're googooing at will carve her initials on your back with the breadknife some one of these days.

DEVLIN—I should fret!

ROGERS—(disgustedly) What you can see in these skirts, has got me beat. They're so homely the mules shy at them.

DEVLIN—Is that so? Well, let me tell you, there's some class to some of the dames down here. You ought to have seen the bear I lamped this afternoon. Some queen, take it from me.

ROGERS—Load that noise in one of the cannons and fire it off!

DEVLIN—On the level, Hen, she had the swellest lamps I've ever seen on a dame; and a figure—my boy! my boy!

ROGERS—Captain Sweeney of the Marines, please listen! And I suppose you copped her and dated her up?

DEVLIN—Nothing like it, Hen. She was doing a sob act on one of the

benches in that little park out here, and I asked her in my best Spanish what was the matter. Phew! Talk about the icy once-over! She looked at me as if I was a wet dog. I turned and beat it like a little man.

ROGERS—You were wise, for once. She'd have operated on you with her stiletto in another second. I wouldn't trust one of these dolls as far as I could hit Walter Johnson's fast one.

DEVLIN—But what d'you suppose she was doing a weep about?

ROGERS—(dryly) Maybe one of her husbands got killed in the war.

DEVLIN—What sweet thoughts you have! S'long, Hen. Don't forget to have Gomez postpone that shooting thing. (He goes to door in rear.)

ROGERS—I won't; and you come back early—if you're still alive. I want you to scratch my back before I hit the hay. I'd have to be a contortionist or a centipede to follow this flea-game properly.

DEVLIN—(laughing) They'll take your mind off your worries. Be good! (He passes the sentry and disappears in the darkness. Another cheer is heard from the next room. Rogers grunts disgustedly and attempts to scratch the middle of his back. The sentry's head falls forward on his chest as he dozes in the doorway.)

(Anita Fernandez appears outside the door and creeps stealthily by the sentry into the room. She is a beautiful young Mexican girl with a mass of black hair and great black eyes. She stumbles over the saddle by the door and utters a little cry of pain. The sentry wakes up, rushes over to her and grabs her furiously by the arm. He drags her toward the door. Rogers springs from his chair and yells at the sentry.)

ROGERS—Hey, you Mike, what are you doing? Let go of that dame! (The sentry scowls uncertainly at him. Rogers makes a threatening gesture and the sentry releases Anita and returns to his post by the doorway. Anita sinks into a chair by the table and, hiding her face in her hands, commences to sob. Rogers stands beside not knowing what to do.)

ROGERS—What'll I say to her? (sees the English-Spanish book of Devlin's on the table) Here's Al's Spanish book. Let's see. (turns over the pages) What do you want? —I wonder how you say it—Oh, here it is. (He repeats the line to himself then bends down to Anita.) Que quere, Seniorita? (He pronounces it "Kwi query, Seenorita?") She raises her head and stares at him with a puzzled expression.) She doesn't make me at all —Oh Hell!

ANITA—(haughtily) Please to not swear, senior.

ROGERS—(confused) Excuse me—awfully sorry—tongue slipped.

(with a sigh of relief) Thank Go—heavens, you speak English.

ANITA—But most badly, señor.

ROGERS—(sitting down across the table from her) No, very good, just as good as mine. Who was it you wanted to see?

ANITA—El Generalissimo Gomez.

ROGERS—(shaking his head) You better wait. He'll be all lit up like a torch tonight.

ANITA—(mystified) Señor?

ROGERS—You know what I mean—he's soused, pickled, stewed, boiled—

ANITA—(in puzzled accents) Es-stewed? Boiled? (in horrified tones) You mean he is cooking—the General? But no, señor, I onderstand Eenglish verree badly. For one year alone, I estudy in the convent in Nueva York—Noo York. Then mi madre—my mothair—die and I must come home to the house of my fathair becose I have more years—I am older than my sisters. (There is a ringing “Viva” from the next room. Anita turns pale.)

ROGERS—(making a motion with his hand as if he were taking a drink and nodding toward the room) You understand now? He's drinking, and

ANITA—(shuddering) Ah, he es drunk, no?

ROGERS—I'm afraid he will be before he leaves that room—if he isn't already.

ANITA—(the tears starting to her eyes) Mi padre!

ROGERS—You better wait until tomorrow to see him.

ANITA—Eet ees not possible. I must—tonight!

ROGERS—(earnestly) Don't do it, Kid! Don't you know Gomez is a bad guy—man—for a young girl to come and see at night—'specially when he's drunk?

ANITA—(flushing) I know, si, señor, but eet must be.

ROGERS—Won't you tell me why?

ANITA—(her voice trembling) Si, I will tell you. Eet ees not long to tell, señor. You have heard—you know Ernesto Fernandez?

ROGERS—You mean the Fernandez who is going to be shot tomorrow morning?

ANITA—(shuddering) Si, señor, he eet ees I mean. He ees my fathair.

ROGERS—(astounded) Your father! Good God!

ANITA—I must see the General Gomez tonight to ask him to save my

fathair.

ROGERS—He will not do it.

ANITA—(faintly) You know that, senor?

ROGERS—Virella is with him—in there—now!

ANITA—(terrified) Virella? He is the most bad enemy of my fathair.

ROGERS—You might buy Gomez off; pay him to set your father free. He'll do anything for money. Have you any money?

ANITA—Alas, no, senor; Gomez has taken from us everything.

ROGERS—Too bad, too bad! Hm— Well, you mustn't stay here any longer. They're liable to come out any minute. Go home now, and I'll see what I can do with Gomez.

ANITA—(resolutely) Gracias, I thank you, senor; you are very kind—but I must see Gomez.

ROGERS—(deliberately,—looking steadily into her eyes) Don't you know what Gomez will want—the price he will make you pay if he finds you here?

ANITA—(closing her eyes and swaying weakly on her feet) For the life—of my fathair—(sobs softly)

ROGERS—(looking at her in admiration) God!

ANITA—(fiercely) I would keel myself to save him!

ROGERS—But even if he said he'd free your father you couldn't believe him. What is Gomez' word worth? No, you must let me fix this for you.

ANITA—(doubtfully) But you— Gomez ees verree powerful, senor— ees it possible for you to do?

ROGERS—(decisively) I'll save your old man if I have to start a revolution of my own to do it.

ANITA—(her eyes shining with gratitude) Ah, thank you, senor—but if you should fail?

ROGERS—(emphatically) I won't fail. You just watch me start something! (He has scarcely finished speaking when the door to the right is thrown open and Gomez and Virella enter the room. They are both in a state of great excitement and show they have been drinking. Virella is an undersized man with shifty, beady black eyes and a black mustache. Gomez is tall and heavily built with a bloated dissipated-looking face and a bristly black mustache. Both are dressed in new uniforms of olive-drab and wear military caps. Cartridge-belts with automatic revolvers in leather holsters are strapped about their waists over their coats.)

(Anita stares at them for a moment with horrified loathing; then shrinks away into the far corner of the room. Gomez turns to shout an “Adios” to the officers who are still carousing in the room he has just left; then bangs the door shut behind him. Virella sees Anita and walks toward her with a drunken leer on his flushed face.)

VIRELLA—Buenos noches, senorita.

ROGERS—(steps forward and places himself in front of Virella whom he grasps by the shoulders and forcibly turns in the direction of the door) Now, beat it, Snake-in-the-Grass!

VIRELLA—(struggling to free himself) Pig of a Gringo!

ROGERS—General Gomez and I want to have a talk in private, don’t we, Gomez? (He glances at Gomez with a commanding air.)

GOMEZ—(uncertainly) Por cierto, amigo, if you like eet.

VIRELLA—(frothing at the mouth with rage) Dog! Pig!

ROGERS—(calmly) Those are hard words, my pet—and you hear what your general commands? (He turns to Gomez.)

GOMEZ—Si, Virella, I command eet.

ROGERS—(to Virella, contemptuously) Now blow before I crown you! (He draws back his fist threateningly. Virella shrinks away from him, salutes Gomez, and slinks out of the door in rear.)

GOMEZ—(forcing a laugh) Ees thees the way you treat my generals?

ROGERS—You ought to shoot that little scorpion—before he shoots you.

GOMEZ—(frowning) Eet ees true, amigo, what you say, and pairhaps soon—but—now he ees to me necessary. (He notices Anita for the first time and turns to Rogers with a chuckle.) Excuse me, a senorita! (takes his cap off and makes her a gallant bow) Ah, Senor Rogers, you are—how you call eet? —a man of—ladies, no? (He walks over to Anita who shrinks back to the wall in terror.) Have you fear of me, chiquita? Of Gomez? But Pancho Gomez, he loav the ladies, that ees well known. Ask el senor Rogers. (He chucks her under the chin.)

ROGERS—(stepping between them—quietly) This young lady is my friend, Gomez.

GOMEZ—(biting his lips) I say in fun only. (He walks back to the table and remarks sullenly to Rogers who is following him) She ees “muy hermosa”, verree preety, your senorita.

ROGERS—She is the daughter of Ernesto Fernandez.

GOMEZ—(surprised) Que dice? What you say?

ROGERS—She's the daughter of the man you're going to have shot in the morning. She came to ask you—

GOMEZ—(emphatically) No, hombre, no! I know what you will say. I can not do. Eet ees not possible! (Anita rushes forward and throws herself at his feet.) No, no, no, senorita, I must go. (He strides toward the door in the rear. Anita lies where she has thrown herself sobbing hopelessly.)

ROGERS—One minute, Gomez! Where are you going?

GOMEZ—To prepare the attack. Ah, I forget! I have not tole you. (excitedly) Tonight, amigo, we storm the town. We catch them asleep, no? and before they wake they are—(he makes a motion across his neck with his forefinger) dead, how you call eet?—as a nail. (proudly) Eet ees a plan sublime, most glorious—eet ees the plan of Gomez! In one small week, hombre, shall we be in Mexico City.

ROGERS—That Scotch is great stuff. One more drink and old Napoleon would be a piker.

GOMEZ—(puzzled) What you say?

ROGERS—Nothing, nothing. (his face lighting up with a ray of hope) A night attack, eh?

GOMEZ—Si, hombre, at twelve hours—twelve o'clock.

ROGERS—(calmly) Who said so?

GOMEZ—I say it, I, Pancho Gomez!

ROGERS—(emphatically) Well, you just listen to me, Gomez; I say you can't do it. There'll be no night attacks in this war when I'm around. (Gomez is stupefied.) How do you expect us to get pictures at night? You didn't think of that, eh?

GOMEZ—(bewildered) But, amigo—

ROGERS—Nix on the night attacks, do you get me? (pulls a paper out of his pocket) Here's a copy of your contract giving us rights to all your fights, all, do you hear, all! And we got one clause especially for night attacks. (reads) The party of the second part hereby agrees to fight no battles at night or on rainy days or at any time whatsoever when the light is so poor as to make the taking of motion pictures impracticable. Failure to comply with these conditions will constitute a breach of contract and free the party of the first part from all the obligations entered into by this contract. (hands the contract to Gomez) Here it is, black and white, English and Spanish both, with your signature at the bottom with mine. Read for yourself. (Gomez glances at the paper mechanically and hands it back.)

GOMEZ—(with a defiant snarl) And if I say: “To hell, you!” Then what you do, eh?

ROGERS—(mimicking the General’s tone) Who buys and sends you most of your ammunition, eh? Who pays you and the other Generals and the German in charge of your artillery—the only man who savvys how to use the guns right—eh? Who has promised to see that you get siege guns for Mexico City and twenty more machine guns with men, real men, to run them for you, eh? Your soldiers’ll desert you if you don’t pay them soon, and you know it. Well, who has agreed to loan you the money to give them their back pay, eh? And, above all, who has promised to help you become President when you reach Mexico City? (impressively) We have—The Earth Motion Picture Company! Well, you break this contract and all that stops, see? and goes to the other side.

GOMEZ—(softly—fingering his revolver) Bueno; but I can also have you shot, hombre.

ROGERS—Nix on that rough stuff! You wouldn’t dare. You’ve got to keep on the right side of the U.S.A. or your revolution isn’t worth the powder to blow it to—Mexico.

GOMEZ—(pleadingly) But, amigo, permit eet this once. The plan is fine, the town will be ours, my soldiers will steal and no more grumble against Gomez. Tomorrow I will shoot all the prisoners for your pictures, I promise eet.

ROGERS—(kindly) I’d like to do you a favor, Gomez, but I don’t see my way to do this, unless—

GOMEZ—(with a smile) Aha, tell me, hombre, your price.

ROGERS—(firmly) The life of Ernesto Fernandez! (Anita jumps to her fret and stretches out her arms beseechingly to Gomez. He twirls his mustache thoughtfully for a moment.)

GOMEZ—Bueno, my friend, I accept your terms. (He goes to the table and hurriedly scratches a few lines which he hands to Anita.) Su padre de ueste—your father, he ees free, senorita. For this thank my fine friend Senor Rogers. (He claps Rogers jovially on the back.) Now must I have shot the General Virella who will never forgive me your father should live, senorita. Mexico ees too es-small for those two hombres—both alive. (pulls a flask from his pocket and offers it to Rogers who refuses with a smile) Senor Rogers—how you call eet? —here ees looking at you! (drinks) And now I must to prepare the attack. (goes to the door; then turns and remarks grandiloquently) Should anyone wish me, senor,

tell them that e'en the hour of battle, Pancho Gomez, like the immortal Juarez, will ever be found at the head of his brave soldiers. Adios! (He makes a sweeping bow and goes out past the saluting sentry.)

ROGERS—(with a long whistle of amusement—turning to Anita) Some bull! Honest, you've got to hand it to that guy, at that.

ANITA—And now I, too, must go—to my poor fathair.

ROGERS—Can't I take you there? You know there's lots of drunken soldiers around and—

ANITA—No, no, senor, you are too kind. Eet ees but two steps to the carcel—the prison. Eet ees not necessary. (indicating the paper in her hand) The name of Gomez is most sufficient. (holding out her hand to him with a shy smile) Muchissima gracias, senor,—with all my heart do I thank you. My fathair and I—we will be at the home tomorrow—eet ees the first hacienda beyond the hill—you will come, senor? As a brother, my father's son, shall you be to us!

ROGERS—(holding her hand and looking into her eyes) Only—a brother?

ANITA—(drawing her hand away in confusion, runs to the door; then turns) Quien sabe, senor? Who knows? (She hurries out.)

ROGERS—(does a few Spanish dance steps, snapping his fingers and humming. The sentry grins at him.) What are you grinning at, Mike?

THE SENTRY—(with a contemptuous smile makes a gesture of turning a wheel near his head) Muy loco!

ROGERS—I got you the first time, Mike. Crazy is the right word. (He commences to sing) Mexico, My bright-eyed Mexico. (Devlin appears in the doorway and scowls darkly at him.)

DEVLIN—Kill it, kill it, you bone! (Comes in and throws his hat irritably on the table. Rogers looks at him with an amused smile.) What're you chirping about? Are you soused, too? Where have you hidden the joy-water? Everyone in this bush-league army seems all corned up tonight except me. Say I just got another flash at that dame I was telling you about. She looked right through me at something behind my back. Some nerve to that greaser chicken giving a real white man the foot! (scornfully) I got a good slant at her this time. She isn't much to look at after all. Back in God's Country we'd use her photo for a before-taking ad.

ROGERS—(indignantly) Al, you always were a simp! (grumblingly) Better get a pair of cheaters for those bum lamps of yours. (cheerfully)

Cheer up, Al, you're all wrong, my son, you're all wrong! (Devlin gapes at him in open mouthed amazement, Rogers commences to sing again: "Mexico, my bright-eyed Mexico." The sentry grunts contemptuously, as The Curtain Falls)

THE TWILIGHT SAINT

by Stark Young

CHARACTERS

GUIDO, _the husband, a young poet._

LISSETTA, _his wife._

PIA, _a neighbor woman._

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

In the year 1215 A.D.

A room in GUIDO's house, on a hillside near Bevagna. It is a poor apartment, clumsily kept. On your left near the front is a bed; on the floor by the bed lie scattered pages of manuscript. A table littered with manuscripts and crockery stands against the back wall of the room to the right. On the right hand wall is a big fireplace with copper vessels and brass. A bench sits by the fireplace and several stools about the room. On the stone flags two sheepskins are spread.

Through the open door in the middle of the back wall rises the slope of a hill, green with spring and starred with flowers. A stream is visible through the grass and the drowsy sound of the water fills the air. The late yellow sunlight falls through a window over the bed like gilding and floods the hill without.

LISSETTA lies on the bed, still, her eyes closed. PIA sits on the single bench, halfway in the great fireplace, shelling peas. She is a little peasant woman with a kerchief on her head and a wrinkled face as brown as a nut.

GUIDO sits at the table, his face to the wall, his chin on his palm.

PIA.

Guido, Guido, thou hast not spoke this hour,
Nor read one word nor written aught. Dear Lord,
The lion on the palace at Assisi
Sits not more still in stone! Guido, look thou!

GUIDO [_turning round without looking at her_].

Yes, old Pia, good neighbor.

PIA.

Yes, old Pia! Guido, grieve not so much,
Lisetta will be well before the spring
Comes round again.

GUIDO.

Yes, Lisetta will be well perhaps. God grant!

PIA.

Well, what then?

GUIDO.

'Tis not only of her I think, Pia, here am I
Shut in this house from month to month a nurse;
Here lies she sick, this child, and may not stir;
And I, lacking due means to hire, must serve
The house; while my best self, my soul, my art,
Rust. My soul is scorched with holy thirst,
My temples throb, my veins run fire; but yet,
For all my dim distress and vague desire,
No word, no single song, no verse, has come--
O Blessed God!--stifled with creature needs,
And with necessity about my throat!

PIA.

Thy corner is too hot, the glaring sun
Is yet on the wall.

GUIDO.

'Tis not that sun that maddens me, O Pia!
Can you not see me shrunk? Have you not heard
That other Guido of Perugia
How he is grown? How lately at the feast
That Ugolino, the great cardinal,
Spread at Assisi Easter night, Guido
Read certain of his verses and declaimed
Pages of cursed sonnets to the guests.

PIA.

Young Guido of Perugia, thy friend?

GUIDO.

Yea. And when he ended, came the Duke
Down from the dais to kiss that Guido's hand
Humbly, and said that poesy was king.

PIA.

Madonna, kissed by the Duke!

GUIDO.

And I, O God, I might have honor too
Could I but break this prison where I drudge!

PIA.

Speak low, her sleep is light. Her road is hard
As well as thine. For all this year, since thou

Didst bring her to Rieto here to us,
Hath she lain on her bed, broken with pain,
This child that is thy wife and loveth thee.

GUIDO.

Aye, yes, 'tis true, she loveth me, she loveth me,
And I love her. 'Tis worse--add grief to care,
And Poesy fares worse.

PIA.

And she is grown most pale and still of late.

GUIDO.

Look, Pia, how she lieth there like death,
That far-off patience on her face. Now, now,
Surely I needs must make a song! And yet
I may not; ashes and floor-sweeping clog
My soul within me!

PIA.

Nay, let thy dreams pass. Look thou, how pale!
Dear Lord, how blue her little veins do shine!

GUIDO.

Thou art most kind, good neighbor, to come here
Helping our house. And it is very strange
That when we are so kind we cannot know
The heart also. For in my soul I hear
A bell summoning me always--

PIA.

If I should stew in milk the peas, maybe--

Do you think the child would eat it?

GUIDO.

For thy world is not my world, kind old friend.

PIA.

Why do you not walk, Guido, for a while,
I have an hour yet.

GUIDO.

Then I will go, Pia. But not for long,
I will come back soon enough to my chores, be sure;
Mine is a short tether.

[_He goes out. LISETTA on the bed opens her eyes._]

LISETTA.

Pia.

PIA.

Yes, dear child.

LISETTA.

Pia, turn my pillow, I am stifled.

PIA.

There! Thou hast slept well?

LISETTA.

I have not slept.

PIA.

Holy Virgin, thou hast not slept!

LISETTA.

Pia, think you I did not know? This month
I scarce have slept for thinking on his lot.
I read his fighting soul. Where are his songs,
The great renown that waited him? Down, down,
Struck by the self-same hand that shattered me.
I listen night on night and hear him moan
In his sleep--

PIA.

It is his love for thee, Lisetta.

LISETTA.

The padre from the village hemmed and said
That God had sent me and my sickness here
For Guido's cross to bear, his scourge. They thought
I slept--

PIA.

Thou hast dreamed this, he loveth thee, Lisetta.

LISETTA.

Yea, loveth me somewhat but glory more.
And I would have it so. O Mother of God,
When wilt thou send me death? O Blessed Mother,
I have lain so still!

PIA.

Beware, Lisetta, tempt not God!

LISETTA.

Death is the sister of all them that weep, Pia.

PIA.

Child, child, try thou to sleep.

LISETTA.

For thy sake will I try.

PIA.

Aye, sleep now. I will smooth thy bed.

[_PIA begins to draw up the covers smooth. She stops suddenly to listen._]

Hist!

LISETTA.

What, good Pia?

PIA.

Footsteps. Look, it is a monk.

[_FRANCIS OF ASSISI comes to the door._]

FRANCIS.

I have not eaten food this day. Hast thou
Somewhat that I may eat?

PIA.

Alas, poor brother, sit thee here; there's bread
And cheese and lentils, eat thy store. Poor 'tis,
But given in His name.

FRANCIS.

I will eat then and bless thee.

PIA.

He taketh but a crust!

FRANCIS.

It is enough. He that hath eaten long
The bread of the heart hath little hunger in him.

PIA.

Sit thou and rest, poor soul.

FRANCIS.

Nay, I must go on. My daughter, child,
Thou sleepest not for all thy lowered lids.
Tears quiver on thy lashes, hast thou pain?

LISETTA.

The tears of women even in dreams may fall,
Good brother. Wilt thou not bide?

FRANCIS.

I must fare on.

LISETTA.

Aye, aye, the world lies open to thy hand,
But unto me this twelvemonth is a death.
The flesh is dead, and dying lies my soul,
Shrunk like a flower in my fevered hand.

FRANCIS [_he goes over and stands beside the bed_].

My dear.

LISETTA.

I may not see the stars rise on the hills,
Nor tend the flocks at even, nor rise to do
Aught of the small sweet round of duties owed
To him I love; but lie a burden to him,
Calling on death who heareth not.

FRANCIS.

My life hath given me words for thee to hear.

LISETTA.

Surely thy life is peace.

FRANCIS.

There is a life larger than life, that dwells
Invisible from all; whose lack alone
Is death. There in thy soul the stars may rise,
And at the even the gentle thoughts return
To flock the quiet pastures of the mind;
And in the large heart love is all thou owest
For service unto God and thy Beloved.

LISETTA.

Little Brother!

FRANCIS.

May you have God's peace, dear friends. Farewell.

[_He goes out. PIA stands a moment wiping her eyes, then returns to shelling the peas. There is a silence for a while._]

PIA.

Why dost thou look so long upon the door?

LISETTA.

Pia, the spring smiles on the tender grass,
Surely the sun is brighter where he stood.

PIA.

'Tis a glaring sun for twilight.

LISETTA.

Pia, 'twill be the gentlest of all eves.
Surely God sent the brother for my need,
To give His peace.

PIA.

Aye, and my old heart ripens at his words
Like apples in the sun. 'Tis a sweet monk.

LISETTA.

Who is he, think you?

PIA.

One of the Little Poor Men, by his brown.
They are too thin, these brothers, and do lack
Stomach for life. [_She returns to the peas._] Mark, oh, 'tis merry now
To see the little beggars from their pods
Popping like schoolboys from their shoes in spring!
The season hath been so fine and dry this year
My peas are smaller and must have more work.
Well, well, labor is good, and things made scarce
Are better loved.

LISETTA.

Pia, thou art a good woman.

PIA.

Child, do not make me cry. 'Tis thy pure heart
Deceives thee. Stubborn I am and full of sloth,
And a wicked old thing.

LISETTA.

I would not grieve thee. Pia, 'twas my love
That sees thy goodness better than thyself.

PIA [_hanging the kettle of peas over the coals_].

Lisetta, I see the sky at the chimney top.

[_PIA begins to sing in her sweet, old, cracked voice, as she stirs
the pot_:]

_Firefly, firefly, come from the shadows,
Twilight is falling over the meadows,
Burn, little garden lamps, flicker and shimmer,
Shine, little meadow stars, twinkle and glimmer.
Firefly, firefly, shine, shine!_

LISETTA.

Pia.

PIA.

Yes.

LISETTA.

Pia, come near me here. [_PIA kneels by the bed._] Can you not see
How much I love? If I could only speak
To him or he to me, Guido, my love!

PIA.

Surely he is beside thee often.

LISETTA.

His hand is near, but not his heart.

PIA.

Nay, child, 'tis Guido's way. He speaks but little.
When I speak to him look what he says,
"Yes, good Pia," 'tis not much.

LISETTA.

Aye, tell me not. On winter nights I lay
Hearing the tree limbs rattle there like hail,
And from the corner eaves the dropping rain
Like big dogs lapping all about--and he
Spoke not to me. He sat beside his taper
But never a line wrote down. Once I had words,
Bright dreams, that shone through him, the same fire shone

Through both, his songs were mine!

PIA.

Yes, thine--rest thee, rest thee!

LISETTA.

But more his, Pia, more his!

PIA.

Aye, his. Wilt thou not eat the broth?

LISETTA.

Not now, good Pia, 'tis not for food I die.
'Tis not for food.

PIA.

Yet thou must eat.

LISETTA.

Wilt thou not read one song of these to me?

PIA.

Close then thine eyes and rest.

[_ LISETTA closes her eyes. A shepherd's pipe far-off and faint begins to play; from this on to the end of the play you can hear the shepherd's pipe. PIA takes up at random a sheet of the manuscripts. She sighs a great sigh, and begins to mimic LISETTA's voice._]

THE BALLAD OF THE RUNNING WATER

O music locked amid the stones,
Beside the--amid the--

LISSETTA.

Read on--and thou hast told me day by day
Thou couldst not read.

PIA.

I read from hearing thee from day to day
Repeat the verses.

LISSETTA.

Fie! Give them to me here.

[_ She takes the paper and holds it in her hands on her breast, and
reads without looking at it._]

_O music locked amid the stones,
My love hath spoken like to thee,_

Pia, think you--Pia, do you not hear
The mowers and the reapers in the fields
Singing the evening song, and the twilight pipes?
The twilight is the hour when hearts break!
How many lonely twilights will there be
Ere God will spare me?

PIA [_kneeling_].

Hush, child, hush, darling!

[_ LISSETTA turns her face to the window by the bed. PIA strokes her
hand and sings softly:_]

Firefly, firefly, come from the shadows--

There!--he is coming now, I hear his steps
Upon the gravel road. Good-night, sweet child,
I'll get me home.

LISETTA.

Pia, good-night once more.

[_PIA slips away. GUIDO enters softly. The twilight is gone and the moon falls through the window over the bed. The hill outside is bright with moonlight._]

GUIDO [_softly_].

Asleep, Lisetta?

LISETTA.

Guido! Ah, I have need of naught, Guido.
Thou needst not leave yet the pleasant air.

GUIDO.

Lisetta, my love, I have been long from thee.

LISETTA.

Let not that trouble thee, my needs are few,
And Pia is most kind.

GUIDO.

So little I may do.

LISETTA.

Thou hast already served to weariness.

[_ He kneels beside her bed._]

GUIDO.

My love, I have been long from thee, but now
I will not leave thee any more. Oh, God,
Let these kisses tell my heart to her.

LISETTA.

Guido, my love, perhaps I dream of thee!
Perhaps God sends a dream to solace me.

GUIDO.

Along the stream I went and where it crossed
Bevagna road--where the chestnut grows, thou knowest--
Lisetta, I saw him.

LISETTA.

Yes, yes, I know, whom sawest thou?

GUIDO.

The brother, Francis of Assisi.

LISETTA.

Guido, sawest thou him?

GUIDO.

Aye, him. There had he stopped to rest, being spent;
And round him came the birds, beating their wings
Upon his cloak and lighting on his arm.
I saw him smile on them and heard him speak!
"My brother birds, little brothers, ye should love God

Who gave you your wings and your bright songs and spread
The soft air for you." He stroked their necks
And blessed them. And then I saw his eyes.
"Father," I cried, "speak thou to me, I faint
Beside my way!"

LISSETTA.

Aye, and he said? Guido, what said he?

GUIDO.

"Thou art as one that lieth at the gate
Of Paradise and entereth not. For God
Hath given thee thy soul for its own life,
And not for glory among men."

LISSETTA.

Guido!

GUIDO.

Lisetta, from his kind eyes I drank, and knew
How God had magnified my soul through him,
And sent me peace. And I returned to thee;
For here in thee have I my glory.

LISSETTA.

Guido, the old spring comes back again. And now
I may speak. Guido, look through my window vines there
Where the stars rise. O Love, I have not slept
For lacking thee. And often have I seen
The moonlight lie like sleep upon the hill,
And in the garden of the sky the moon
Drift like a blown rose, Guido, and yet
I might not speak.

GUIDO.

Thou art my saint and shrine!

LISSETTA.

Now shall my dream become thy song again,
And the long twilight be more sweet, Guido!

GUIDO.

I pray thee rest thee now and sleep. Good-night.
My full heart breaks in song; and I will sit
Hearing the blessed saints within my soul,
And will not stir from thee lest thou shouldst wake
When I might not be near to serve thy need.

[_The shepherd pipe far-off and faint is heard playing._]

[THE CURTAIN.]

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THE STRONGER

A SCENE

by August Strindberg

1890

PERSONS

MRS. X., an actress, married.

MISS Y., an actress, unmarried.

THE STRONGER

SCENE

[A corner of a ladies' restaurant; two small tables of cast-iron, a sofa covered with red plush, and a few chairs.]

[MRS. X. enters dressed in hat and winter coat, and carrying a pretty Japanese basket on her arm.]

[MISS Y. has in front of her a partly emptied bottle of beer; she is reading an illustrated weekly, and every now and then she exchanges it for a new one.]

MRS. X. Well, how do, Millie! Here you are sitting on Christmas Eve as lonely as a poor bachelor.

[MISS Y. looks up from the paper for a moment, nods, and resumes her reading.]

MRS. X. Really, I feel sorry to find you like this--alone--alone in a restaurant, and on Christmas Eve of all times. It makes me as sad as when I saw a wedding party at Paris once in a restaurant--the bride was reading a comic paper and the groom was playing billiards with the witnesses. Ugh, when it begins that way, I thought, how will it end? Think of it, playing billiards on his wedding day! Yes, and you're going to say that she was reading a comic paper--

that's a different case, my dear.

[A WAITRESS brings a cup of chocolate, places it before MRS. X., and disappears again.]

MRS. X. [Sips a few spoonfuls; opens the basket and displays a number of Christmas presents] See what I've bought for my tots. [Picks up a doll] What do you think of this? Lisa is to have it. She can roll her eyes and twist her head, do you see? Fine, is it not? And here's a cork pistol for Carl. [Loads the pistol and pops it at Miss Y.]

[MISS Y. starts as if frightened.]

MRS. X. Did I scare you? Why, you didn't fear I was going to shoot you, did you? Really, I didn't think you could believe that of me. If you were to shoot _me_ --well, that wouldn't surprise me the least. I've got in your way once, and I know you'll never forget it--but I couldn't help it. You still think I intrigued you away from the Royal Theatre, and I didn't do anything of the kind--although you think so. But it doesn't matter what I say, of course--you believe it was I just the same. [Pulls out a pair of embroidered slippers] Well, these are for my hubby--tulips--I've embroidered them myself. Hm, I hate tulips--and he must have them on everything.

[MISS Y. looks up from the paper with an expression of mingled sarcasm and curiosity.]

MRS. X. [Puts a hand in each slipper] Just see what small feet Bob has. See? And you should see him walk--elegant! Of course, you've never seen him in slippers.

[MISS Y. laughs aloud.]

MRS. X. Look here--here he comes. [Makes the slippers walk across the table.]

[MISS Y. laughs again.]

MRS. X. Then he gets angry, and he stamps his foot just like this: "Blame that cook who can't learn how to make coffee." Or: "The idiot--now that girl has forgotten to fix my study lamp again." Then there is a draught through the floor and his feet get cold: "Gee, but it's freezing, and those blanked idiots don't even know enough to keep the house warm." [She rubs the sole of one slipper against the instep of the other.]

[MISS Y. breaks into prolonged laughter.]

MRS. X. And then he comes home and has to hunt for his slippers-- Mary has pushed them under the bureau. Well, perhaps it is not right to be making fun of one's own husband. He's pretty good for all that--a real dear little hubby, that's what he is. You should have such a husband--what are you laughing at? Can't you tell? Then, you see, I know he is faithful. Yes, I know, for he has told me himself--what in the world makes you giggle like that? That nasty Betty tried to get him away from me while I was on the road-- can you think of anything more infamous? [Pause] But I'd have scratched the eyes out of her face, that's what I'd have done if I had been at home when she tried it. [Pause] I'm glad Bob told me all about it, so I didn't have to hear it first from somebody else. [Pause] And just think of it, Betty was not the only one! I don't know why it is, but all women seem to be crazy after my husband. It must be because they imagine his government position gives him something to say about the engagements. Perhaps you've tried it yourself--you may have set your traps for him, too? Yes, I don't trust you very far--but I know he never cared for you--and then I have been thinking you rather had a grudge against him.

[Pause. They look at each other in an embarrassed manner.]

MRS. X. Amèlia, spend the evening with us, won't you? Just to show that you are not angry--not with me, at least. I cannot tell exactly why, but it seems so awfully unpleasant to have you--you for an enemy. Perhaps because I got in your way that time [rallentando] or--I don't know--really, I don't know at all--

[Pause. MISS Y. gazes searchingly at MRS. X.]

MRS. X. [Thoughtfully] It was so peculiar, the way our acquaintance--why, I was afraid of you when I first met you; so afraid that I did not dare to let you out of sight. It didn't matter where I tried to go--I always found myself near you. I didn't have the courage to be your enemy--and so I became your friend. But there was always something discordant in the air when you called at our home, for I saw that my husband didn't like you--and it annoyed me just as it does when a dress won't fit. I tried my very best to make him appear friendly to you at least, but I couldn't move him--not until you were engaged. Then you two became such fast friends that it almost looked as if you had not dared to show your real feelings before, when it was not safe--and later--let me see, now! I didn't get jealous--strange, was it not? And I remember the baptism--you were acting as godmother, and I made him kiss you--and he did, but both of you looked terribly embarrassed--that is, I didn't think of it then--or afterwards, even--I never thought of it--till--_now_!

[Rises impulsively] Why don't you say something? You have not uttered a single word all this time. You've just let me go on talking. You've been sitting there staring at me only, and your eyes have drawn out of me all these thoughts which were lying in me like silk in a cocoon--thoughts--bad thoughts maybe--let me think. Why did you break your engagement? Why have you never called on us afterward? Why don't you want to be with us to-night?

[MISS Y. makes a motion as if intending to speak.]

MRS. X. No, you don't need to say anything at all. All is clear to me now. So, that's the reason of it all. Yes, yes! Everything fits together now. Shame on you! I don't want to sit at the same table with you. [Moves her things to another table] That's why I must put those hateful tulips on his slippers--because you love them. [Throws the slippers on the floor] That's why we have to spend the summer in the mountains--because you can't bear the salt smell of the ocean; that's why my boy had to be called Eskil--because that was your father's name; that's why I had to wear your colour, and

read your books, and eat your favourite dishes, and drink your drinks--this chocolate, for instance; that's why--great heavens!--it's terrible to think of it--it's terrible! Everything was forced on me by you--even your passions. Your soul bored itself into mine as a worm into an apple, and it ate and ate, and burrowed and burrowed, till nothing was left but the outside shell and a little black dust. I wanted to run away from you, but I couldn't. You were always on hand like a snake with your black eyes to charm me--I felt how my wings beat the air only to drag me down--I was in the water, with my feet tied together, and the harder I worked with my arms, the further down I went--down, down, till I sank to the bottom, where you lay in wait like a monster crab to catch me with your claws--and now I'm there! Shame on you! How I hate you, hate you, hate you! But you, you just sit there, silent and calm and indifferent, whether the moon is new or full; whether it's Christmas or mid-summer; whether other people are happy or unhappy. You are incapable of hatred, and you don't know how to love. As a cat in front of a mouse-hole, you are sitting there!--you can't drag your prey out, and you can't pursue it, but you can outwait it. Here you sit in this corner--do you know they've nicknamed it "the mouse-trap" on your account? Here you read the papers to see if anybody is in trouble, or if anybody is about to be discharged from the theatre. Here you watch your victims and calculate your chances and take your tributes. Poor Amélia! Do you know, I pity you all the same, for I know you are unhappy--unhappy as one who has been wounded, and malicious because you are wounded. I ought to be angry with you, but really I can't--you are so small after all--and as to Bob, why that does not bother me in the least. What does it matter to me anyhow? If you or somebody else taught me to drink chocolate--what of that? [Takes a spoonful of chocolate; then sententiously] They say chocolate is very wholesome. And if I have learned from you how to dress--*_tant mieux_!*--it has only given me a stronger hold on my husband--and you have lost where I have gained. Yes, judging by several signs, I think you have lost him already. Of course, you meant me to break with him--as you did, and as you are now regretting--but, you see, *_I_* never would do that. It won't do to be narrow-minded, you know. And why should I take only what nobody else wants? Perhaps, after all, I am the stronger

now. You never got anything from me; you merely gave--and thus happened to me what happened to the thief--I had what you missed when you woke up. How explain in any other way that, in your hand, everything proved worthless and useless? You were never able to keep a man's love, in spite of your tulips and your passions--and I could; you could never learn the art of living from the books--as I learned it; you bore no little Eskil, although that was your father's name. And why do you keep silent always and everywhere--silent, ever silent? I used to think it was because you were so strong; and maybe the simple truth was you never had anything to say--because you were unable to-think! [Rises and picks up the slippers] I'm going home now--I'll take the tulips with me--your tulips. You couldn't learn anything from others; you couldn't bend and so you broke like a dry stem--and I didn't. Thank you, Amèlia, for all your instructions. I thank you that you have taught me how to love my husband. Now I'm going home--to him! [Exit.]

(Curtain.)

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